

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1484

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 4879

FROM PAGANELLI EMBASSY DOHA

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: QA US MARR MASS

SUBJ: GOVERNMENT OF QATAR ARMS PROCUREMENT POLICY

1. DURING NOV 5 CONVERSATION WITH SHAYKH HAMAD BIN KHALIFA AL THANI, C-IN-C OF THE QATARI ARMED FORCES, I ASKED SHAYKH HAMAD TO OUTLINE FOR ME GOQ'S ARMS PROCUREMENT POLICY.

2. ACCORDING HAMAD, GOQ INTERESTED ONLY IN RELATIVELY UNSOPHISTICATED DEFENSIVE EQUIPMENT, AND PRESENT REQUIREMENTS INCLUDED ARTILLERY, SMALL NAVAL CRAFT, AND SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES, THE LATTER FOR PROTECTION OF OIL INSTALLATIONS AND NASCENT INDUSTRIAL BASE. HAMAD SAID GOQ'S PREFERRED SOURCES WERE QATAR'S "FRIENDS", AND HE MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY UK, FRANCE AND US. RE ARTILLERY, HE REMINDED ME OF GOQ'S MONTH-OLD REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON 105 MM ARTILLERY AND I TOLD HIM I HAD ASKED DEPT FOR SECOND TIME FOR RESPONSE.

3. I ASKED SHAYKH HAMAD WHETHER GOQ HAD BEEN TALKING WITH FRENCH ABOUT ARMS PURCHASES, AND NOTED THAT AMIR'S RECENT VISIT TO PARIS HAD STIMULATED USUAL STORIES THAT BIG ARMS DEAL BEING NEGOTIATED. HAMAD RESPONDED THAT THERE HAD INDEED BEEN TALKS WITH FRENCH ABOUT ARMS, BUT THAT HE HAD CONDUCTED THEM HERE IN DOHA. IN ANSWER TO MY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS, HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN NO

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AGREEMENT "AS YET" WITH FRENCH AND THAT SUBJECT OF AIRCRAFT

HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED "AS YET".

4. RE MILITARY PROCUREMENT FROM US, SHAYKH HAMAD SAID HE WISHED TO DISCUSS WITH ME IN NEAR FUTURE SPECIFIC QATARI REQUIREMENTS. HE SAID HE WOULD DRAW UP LIST AND IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF THEY COULD BE DISCUSSED WITH DOD REP PRESENT. I REPLIED THAT I THOUGHT THIS COULD BE ARRANGED WHEN HE WAS READY. (COMMENT: WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR DOD REP IN KUWAIT TO VISIT DOHA WHEN SHAYKH HAMAD IS READY FOR DISCUSSION OF HIS SHOPPING LIST? PLEASE ADVISE.)

5. I TOOK OCCASION TO REVIEW US VIEWS ON ARMS SALES AND SECURITY IN GULF, EMPHASIZING THAT SECURITY SHOULD BE REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SOPHISTICATED ARMS RACE SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

6. HAMAD OBSERVED THAT GULF SECURITY DEPENDED IN FIRST INSTANCE ON IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA AND THAT GOQ HAD EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH BOTH. HE COMMENTED THAT IF THINGS GOT BEYOND THIS CONTROL, SMALL STATES SUCH AS QATAR WOULD HAVE TO DEPEND ON INTERNATIONAL ACTION IN UN FORUM TO PRESERVE THEIR SOVEREIGNTY. FURTHER RE SECURITY IN GULF, HAMAD EXPRESSED USUAL CONCERN ABOUT SUBVERSION FROM IRAQ AND PDRY. RE LATTER, HE SAID AMIR HAD TAKEN OPPORTUNITY DURING RABAT SUMMIT TO REMONSTRATE WITH ADENIS ABOUT THEIR SUPPORT FOR INSURGENCY IN OMAN. HE ALSO NOTED THAT IRAN'S OCCUPATION OF TUNBS AND ABU MUSA WAS STILL A SORE POINT WHICH COULD BE EXPLOITED BY IRAQIS AND OTHERS WHO WISHED TO DISRUPT SECURITY OF AREA.
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